

AoS 3 Film Music

Revision tips and exercises

From the Eduqas specification:

Learners will study the use of **timbre, tone colour** and **dynamics** for effect, as follows:

- Use of musical elements to respond to a brief
- Use of leitmotifs and thematic transformation to develop thematic material
- Use of musical features to create a mood in descriptive music
- Use of instrumental and/or vocal timbres to create colour/mood
- Use of dynamics and contrast to create special effects
- Use of music technology to enhance sonority
- Use of minimalistic techniques in film music

AoS 3: Film Music

- This topic is all about how composers use musical elements including sonority, tone colour, and dynamics for effect.

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-JdqHxqkHA> and watch without audio.

- What do you think is happening? Sum up the scene in three bullet points.
- How would you describe the mood/atmosphere?
- What would you expect to hear in the music for this scene?

AoS 3: Film Music

Now watch it with audio

- How does the composer use rhythm to reflect the mood/atmosphere?
- How does the composer use sonority (sounds, instruments) to reflect the mood/atmosphere?
- How does the music enhance the experience of watching the clip?

AoS 3: Film Music

LEITMOTIF – a recurring musical idea (melody/chord sequence/rhythm) which is associated with a particular character or place.

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHbpnVBUfV0> to see a description of a *leitmotif*.

THEMATIC TRANSFORMATION – the development of a leitmotif by adding new notes or material, developing part of the theme, changing the pitch/rhythm, changing the sonority by using different instruments.

- Listen to some famous leitmotifs.
 - *What makes them successful in representing their character/place/idea?*
 - *How are they developed to show thematic transformation?*

AoS 3: Film Music

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bTpp8PQSog>

- What word describes the repeated brass pattern before the melody comes in?
- What instrument plays the main leitmotif?
- Is it major or minor?
- Why do you think John Williams made these musical decisions to represent the character of Indiana Jones?

AoS 3: Film Music

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Htaj3o3JD8I>

- How would you describe the texture at the start?
- What instrument plays the main leitmotif?
- Give two differences between the original presentation of the leitmotif and the second time you hear it.
- What mood/atmosphere does the music help to create?

AoS 3: Film Music

Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV8i-pSVMaQ>

- How does the composer develop the leitmotif?
- Give two ways in which the theme helps to create tension and anticipation
- What word describes the repeated pattern that is heard throughout the opening?

AoS 3: Film Music

Balanced Phrases – Symmetry and Antecedent & Consequent

Melody adds character and shape to the musical ideas, often forming the main part of the music. It is common to have one main thematic idea, with some subsidiary ideas, although sometimes there are a number of equally important themes. It really depends on what suits the drama, or what characters and situations there are in the film. So what makes a good melody? A number of things – and very much depends on what the subject content is.

- Balance between steps and leaps
- Contrast
- Symmetry
- Balanced Phrases and shape
- Use of repetition
- Strong sense of Key

Motif – semiquaver pattern based on a perfect 4th interval

Symmetry – first a descending Perfect 4th in b2, then a rising perfect 4th in b4.



Take a look at Ennio Morricone's theme 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' once again, but this time, we'll going to be more analytical. Take a look at the number of melodic features used in just 8 bars.

Balanced Phrases – Each phrase is 2 bars long

Repetition – semiquaver motif repeated at the start of each bar.

Conjunct – Descending stepwise movement

Strong sense of key – finish on a sustained Tonic note.

Consequent

Question & Answer phrases (Antecedent & Consequent)



Antecedent

AoS 3: Film Music

Make sure you know your instruments, but most importantly, make sure you know what different instruments are used for!

Melodic choices

FANFARE = military/patriotic/heroic.
Uses mainly the notes of the triad (e.g. C, E, and G).
e.g. *Saving Private Ryan*, *20th Century Fox*

ASCENDING FIFTH = optimism, heroism.
John Williams often starts his melodies with a rising fifth.
e.g. *Superman*, *Star Wars*

FALLING INTERVAL = sadness.
A musical 'sigh'.
e.g. *Schindler's List*

ASCENDING GLISSANDO = fear
Particularly effective in high strings.
e.g. 'A Knife in the Dark' from *Lord of the Rings*

CLOSE/CHROMATIC INTERVALS = fear, horror
Semitones are used in conjunction with other unexpected intervals in:
e.g. *Psycho*, *Jaws*

Musical footprints in Film Music

Rhythmic choices

SYNCOPATION for violence/unease
Short syncopated rhythms to create tension and fear.
e.g. *Psycho*, *Jaws*

OSTINATO for action/tension
Doesn't have to be on a percussion instrument...
e.g. *Vertigo*, *The Exorcist*, *Apollo 13*, *Atonement*

REGULAR RHYTHMS for romance
Simple patterns, steady beats, balanced phrases.
e.g. 'My Heart Will Go On' from *Titanic*, 'Now We Are Free' from *Gladiator*

Instrument choices

TRUMPETS + SNARE DRUM = military/patriotic/heroic.
e.g. *Apollo 13*, *Superman*, *Indiana Jones*

VIOLINS/STRINGS = romance/sadness.
e.g. *Schindler's List*

VOCALS = religious connotations, cult associations OR hymn
e.g. *The Omen*, 'A Knife in the Dark' from *Lord of the Rings* OR *Apollo 13*, *Saving Private Ryan*

SOLO PIANO = nostalgic, eerie
e.g. *The Piano*, *American Beauty*

ELECTRONIC INSTRUMENTS e.g. synth = sci-fi
e.g. *Blade Runner*

AoS 3: Film Music

Approaching the 10-mark question

Dynamics

Rhythm

Pitch

Sonority

Melody

Instrumentation

Texture

Tempo

Harmony/tonality

What buzzwords would you associate with these words?

AoS 3: Film Music

This music is the theme for an action movie. Explain how this music is appropriate for this setting.

Dynamics

Rhythm

Pitch

Sonority

Melody

Instrumentation

Texture

Tempo

Harmony/tonality

***DO NOT repeat/labour points!** E.g. 'the violin represents sadness which adds to the sense of loss and sorrow. This is because the soldiers would be feeling loss and sorrow as there is lots of loss and sorrow in a war. We feel the same sense of loss and sorrow.'*

EDUQAS sample questions on Film Music

- (a) For **each** extract, tick ✓ [3+3]
- (i) one solo instrument
 - (ii) one accompanying instrument (or instruments).
- (b) The music in each extract creates a particular mood and atmosphere for the audience. For **each** extract, explain **two** ways in which the composer achieves this effect. [6]

Search for 'Schindler's List' on YouTube

EXTRACT 1

(a) Identify the instruments:	Choose from:	Tick
(i) Solo Instrument	French Horn	
	Violin	
	Electric Guitar	
(ii) Accompanying Instrument(s)	Brass	
	Harp	
	Percussion	
(b) Explain two ways in which the composer achieves the mood and atmosphere of:		
sorrow/reflection		
(i)	
(ii)	

EDUQAS sample questions on Film Music

- (a) For **each** extract, tick ✓ [3+3]
- (i) one solo instrument
 - (ii) one accompanying instrument (or instruments).
- (b) The music in each extract creates a particular mood and atmosphere for the audience. For **each** extract, explain **two** ways in which the composer achieves this effect. [6]

Search for 'James Bond' on YouTube

EXTRACT 2

(a) Identify the instruments:	Choose from:	Tick
(i) Solo Instrument	Trombone	
	Clarinet	
	Electric Guitar	
(ii) Accompanying Instrument(s)	Brass	
	Piano	
	Percussion	
a. Explain two ways in which the composer achieves the mood and atmosphere of:		
action/excitement		
(i)	
(ii)	

EDUQAS sample questions on Film Music

- (a) For **each** extract, tick ✓ [3+3]
- (i) one solo instrument
 - (ii) one accompanying instrument (or instruments).
- (b) The music in each extract creates a particular mood and atmosphere for the audience. For **each** extract, explain **two** ways in which the composer achieves this effect. [6]

Search for 'Jaws' on YouTube

EXTRACT 3

(a) Identify the instruments:	Choose from:	Tick
(i) Solo Instrument	French Horn	
	Viola	
	Saxophone	
(ii) Accompanying Instrument(s)	Brass	
	Harpsichord	
	Percussion	
(a) Explain two ways in which the composer achieves the mood and atmosphere of:		
suspense		
(i)	
	
	
(ii)	
	
	